

105TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 887

To establish in the National Park Service the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom program, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 11, 1997

Ms. MOSELEY-BRAUN (for herself and Mr. DEWINE) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

A BILL

To establish in the National Park Service the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom program, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “National Underground
5 Railroad Network to Freedom Act of 1997”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.**

7 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

8 (1) the Underground Railroad, which flourished
9 from the end of the 18th century to the end of the

1 Civil War, was 1 of the most significant expressions
2 of the American civil rights movement during its
3 evolution over more than 3 centuries;

4 (2) the Underground Railroad bridged the di-
5 vides of race, religion, sectional differences, and na-
6 tionality, spanned State lines and international bor-
7 ders, and joined the American ideals of liberty and
8 freedom expressed in the Declaration of Independ-
9 ence and the Constitution to the extraordinary ac-
10 tions of ordinary men and women working in com-
11 mon purpose to free a people;

12 (3) pursuant to title VI of Public Law 101–628
13 (16 U.S.C. 1a–5 note; 104 Stat. 4495), the Under-
14 ground Railroad Advisory Committee conducted a
15 study of the appropriate means of establishing an
16 enduring national commemorative Underground
17 Railroad program of education, example, reflection,
18 and reconciliation;

19 (4) the Underground Railroad Advisory Com-
20 mittee found that—

21 (A) although a few elements of the Under-
22 ground Railroad story are represented in exist-
23 ing National Park Service units and other sites,
24 many sites are in imminent danger of being lost
25 or destroyed, and many important resource

1 types are not adequately represented and pro-
2 tected;

3 (B) there are many important sites that
4 have high potential for preservation and visitor
5 use in 29 States, the District of Columbia, and
6 the Virgin Islands;

7 (C) no single site or route completely re-
8 flects and characterizes the Underground Rail-
9 road, since the Underground Railroad's story
10 and associated resources involve networks and
11 regions of the country rather than individual
12 sites and trails; and

13 (D) establishment of a variety of partner-
14 ships between the Federal Government and
15 other levels of government and the private sec-
16 tor would be most appropriate for the protec-
17 tion and interpretation of the Underground
18 Railroad;

19 (5) the National Park Service can play a vital
20 role in facilitating the national commemoration of
21 the Underground Railroad; and

22 (6) the story and significance of the Under-
23 ground Railroad can best engage the American peo-
24 ple through a national program of the National Park
25 Service that links historic buildings, structures, and

1 sites, routes, geographic areas, and corridors, inter-
2 pretive centers, museums, and institutions, and pro-
3 grams, activities, community projects, exhibits, and
4 multimedia materials, in a manner that is both uni-
5 fied and flexible.

6 (b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this Act are—

7 (1) to recognize the importance of—

8 (A) the Underground Railroad;

9 (B) the sacrifices made by slaves who used
10 the Underground Railroad in search of freedom
11 from tyranny and oppression; and

12 (C) the sacrifices made by the people who
13 helped those slaves; and

14 (2) to authorize the National Park Service to
15 coordinate and facilitate—

16 (A) Federal and non-Federal activities to
17 commemorate, honor, and interpret the history
18 of the Underground Railroad;

19 (B) the Underground Railroad’s signifi-
20 cance as a crucial element in the evolution of
21 the national civil rights movement; and

22 (C) the Underground Railroad’s relevance
23 in fostering a spirit of racial harmony and na-
24 tional reconciliation.

1 **SEC. 3. NATIONAL UNDERGROUND RAILROAD NETWORK TO**
2 **FREEDOM PROGRAM.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Interior (re-
4 ferred to in this Act as the “Secretary”) shall establish
5 in the National Park Service a program to be known as
6 the “National Underground Railroad Network to Free-
7 dom” (referred to in this Act as the “National Network”).
8 Under the program, the Secretary shall—

9 (1) produce and disseminate appropriate edu-
10 cational materials, such as handbooks, maps, inter-
11 pretive guides, or electronic information;

12 (2) enter into appropriate cooperative agree-
13 ments and memoranda of understanding to provide
14 technical assistance under subsection (c); and

15 (3) create and adopt an official and uniform
16 symbol or device for the National Network and issue
17 regulations for use of the symbol or device.

18 (b) ELEMENTS.—The National Network shall in-
19 clude—

20 (1) any unit or program of the National Park
21 Service determined by the Secretary to pertain to
22 the Underground Railroad;

23 (2) any other Federal, State, local, or privately
24 owned property pertaining to the Underground Rail-
25 road that has a verifiable connection to the Under-
26 ground Railroad and that is included on, or deter-

1 mined by the Secretary to be eligible for inclusion
 2 on, the National Register of Historic Places;

3 (3) any other governmental or nongovernmental
 4 facility or program of an educational, research, or
 5 interpretive nature that is directly related to the Un-
 6 derground Railroad.

7 (c) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS AND MEMORANDA
 8 OF UNDERSTANDING.—To achieve the purposes of this
 9 Act and to ensure effective coordination of the Federal
 10 and non-Federal elements of the National Network re-
 11 ferred to in subsection (b) with National Park Service
 12 units and programs, the Secretary may enter into a coop-
 13 erative agreement or memorandum of understanding with,
 14 and provide technical assistance to—

15 (1) the head of another Federal agency, a
 16 State, a locality, a regional governmental body, or a
 17 private entity; or

18 (2) in cooperation with the Secretary of State,
 19 the Government of Canada, Mexico, or any appro-
 20 priate country in the Caribbean.

21 (d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
 22 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act—

23 (1) \$500,000 for fiscal year 1998; and

24 (2) \$1,000,000 for each fiscal year thereafter.

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